R^3 is unbranched alkyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, branched alkyl having 3 to 20 carbon atoms, cyclic alkyl, C_1–C_4-alkyl-substituted cyclic alkyl, phenyl, or benzyl, which is optionally substituted or unsubstituted, and optionally contains at least one heteroatom, and

p denotes para with respect to the two methylene radicals on both sides of Ar,

the process comprising the following steps:

a) reacting a compound of the formula (II):

$$p\text{-}X\text{-}CH_2\text{-}Ar\text{-}CH_2\text{-}X \qquad (II)$$

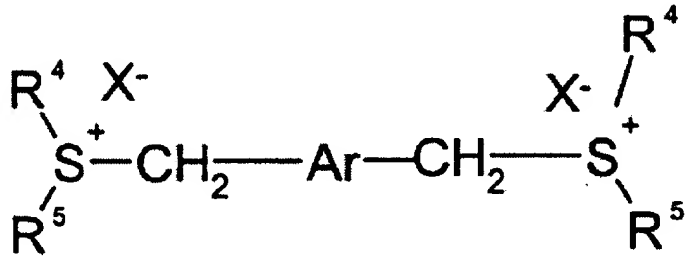
in which Ar and X are as defined under the formula (I), with an organic sulfide of the formula (III):

$$R^4\text{-}S\text{-}R^5 \qquad (III)$$

in which:

R^4 and R^5 are identical or different and are unbranched alkyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, branched alkyl having 3 to 20 carbon atoms, cyclic alkyl having 3 to 10 carbon atoms, or C_1-C_4-alkyl-substituted cyclic alkyl, or R^4 and R^5 together form a ring, which optionally contains at least one heteroatom selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen,

to give a compound of the formula (IV):



(IV)

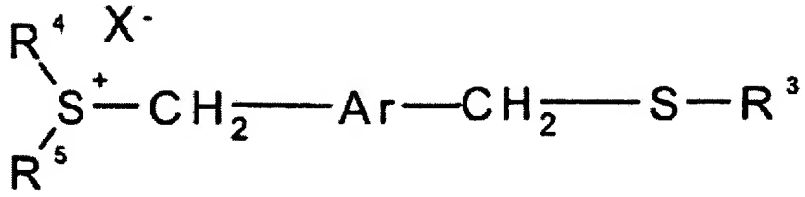
in which R^4, R^5, X, and Ar are as defined above,

b) reacting the compound of the formula (IV) with from 0.85 to 1.1 equivalents of a mercaptan of the formula (V):

$$R^3\text{-}SH \qquad (V)$$

in which:

R^3 is unbranched alkyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, branched alkyl having 3 to 20 carbon atoms, cyclic alkyl, C_1-C_4-alkyl-substituted cyclic alkyl, phenyl, or benzyl, which optionally is substituted or unsubstituted and optionally contains at least one heteroatom, to give a compound of the formula (VI):



(VI)

c) warming of the compound of the formula (VI) in a liquid and formation of the compound of the formula (VII):

(VII)

by elimination of the organic sulfide of the formula (III), where the compound of the formula (VII) is dissolved in the above liquid,

d) oxidizing the compound of the formula (VII) with an oxidant, to give the compound of the formula (I).

19. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein Ar is an aromatic ring that is mono- or polysubstituted by C_1-C_{20}-alkyl, C_3-C_{20}-alkoxy, C_3-C_{20}-branched alkyl, phenyl or benzyl radicals, and optionally contains up to 4 heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen.

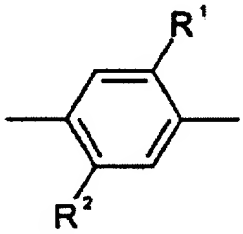
20. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein R^3 is cyclohexyl or cyclohexylmethyl.

21. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein R^3 contains at least one heteroatom selected from the group consisting of O, N, and Si.

22. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein R^4 and R^5 are independently selected from the group consisting of cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, and cyclohexylmethyl.

23. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein the radical X is selected from the group consisting of halogen, -O-tosylate, -O-mesylate, and -O-trifluoroacetate.

24. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18 wherein Ar is the structural unit:

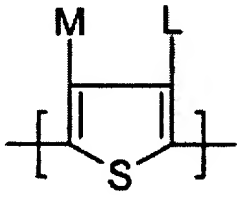


in which:

R^1 and R^2 are identical or different and are hydrogen, an unbranched alkyl or alkoxy radical having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a branched alkyl or alkoxy radical having 3 to 20 carbon atoms, phenyl, or benzyl, where the abovementioned radicals are optionally substituted by halogen, cyano, nitro, or an ester having 1 to 20 carbon atoms.

25. (New) The process as claimed in claim 24, wherein the alkoxy radical is substituted by a halogen selected from the group consisting of chlorine, bromine, and fluorine.

26. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein Ar is the structural unit:



in which:

M and L are identical or different and are hydrogen, an unbranched alkyl or alkoxy radical having 1 to 16 carbon atoms, a branched alkyl or alkoxy radical having 3 to 16 carbon atoms, phenyl or benzyl, where the abovementioned radicals are optionally substituted by halogen, cyano, nitro, or an ester having 1 to 16 carbon atoms, or M and L together are a bridge having at least 4 bridge members, which optionally contains at least one heteroatom.

27. (New) The process as claimed in claim 26, wherein the alkoxy radical is substituted by a halogen selected from the group consisting of chlorine, bromine, and fluorine.

28. (New) The process as claimed in claim 26, wherein M and L form a bridge having at least 4 bridge members and the bridge contains at least one heteroatom selected from the group consisting of oxygen and sulfur.

29. (New) The process as claimed in claim 24, wherein R^1 and R^2, independently of one another, are an unbranched alkoxy radical having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a branched alkoxy radical having 3 to 20 carbon atoms, phenyl or benzyl, where the abovementioned radicals optionally are substituted by halogen, cyano, nitro, or an ester having 1 to 20 carbon atoms.

30. (New) The process as claimed in claim 29, wherein the branched alkoxy radical is substituted by a halogen selected from the group consisting of chlorine, bromine, or fluorine.

31. (New) The process as claimed in claim 29, wherein R^1 and R^2, independently of one another, are an unbranched alkoxy radical having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, a branched alkoxy radical having 3 to 20 carbon atoms, or phenyl, which optionally is substituted by one or more branched or unbranched alkyl or alkoxy groups having up to 20 carbon atoms.

32. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein R^3 is n-, i-, s-, or t-butyl, i-pentyl, octyl, 3,6,9-trioxadecyl, 2-hydroxyethyl, or 2-chloroethyl.

33. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein the organic sulfide of the formula (III) is dimethyl sulfide, diethyl sulfide, 2-ethylthioethanol, thiobisethanol, or a cyclic sulfide.

34. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein the organic sulfide of the formula (III) is tetrahydrothiopyran or tetrahydrothiophene.

35. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out in methanol, water, ethanol, acetone, dioxane, tetrahydropyran, tetrahydrofuran, acetonitrile, or a mixture thereof.

36. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out at a temperature of from about 20°C to 100°C.

37. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out at a temperature of from about 20°C to 60°C.

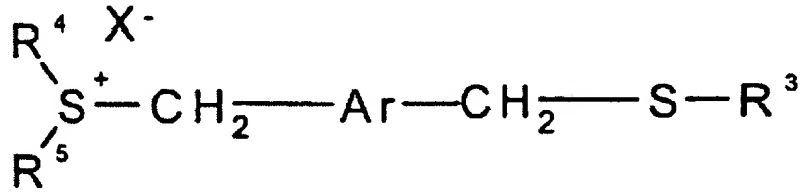
38. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein the reaction in step b) is carried out in the presence of a base.

39. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein from 0.95 to 1.05 equivalents of mercaptan of the formula (V) are employed per mole of the compound of the formula (IV).

40. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein the reaction in step b) is carried out at a temperature of from 0°C to 40°C.

41. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein the reaction in step b) is carried out in a polar, protic solvent.

42. (New) A compound of the formula (VI):



(VI)

in which:

Ar is an optionally substituted aromatic ring system having 4 to 20 carbon atoms,

X is a leaving group,

R^3 is unbranched alkyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, branched alkyl having 3 to 20 carbon atoms, cyclic alkyl, C_1–C_4-alkyl-substituted cyclic alkyl, phenyl, or

benzyl, which optionally is substituted and optionally contains at least one heteroatom, and

R^4 and R^5 are identical or different and are unbranched alkyl having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, branched alkyl having 3 to 20 carbon atoms, cyclic alkyl having 3 to 10 carbon atoms, or C_1-C_4-alkyl-substituted cyclic alkyl, or R^4 and R^5 together form a ring, which optionally contains at least one heteroatom selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen.

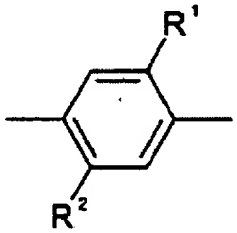
43. (New) The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein Ar is an aromatic ring that is mono- or polysubstituted by C_1-C_{20}-alkyl, C_3-C_{20}-alkoxy, C_3-C_{20}-branched alkyl, phenyl or benzyl radicals, and optionally contains up to 4 heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen.

44. (New) The compound as claimed in claim 42, wherein R^3 is cyclohexyl or cyclohexylmethyl.

45. (New) The compound as claimed in claim 42, wherein R^3 contains at least one heteroatom selected from the group consisting of O, N, and Si.

46. (New) The compound as claimed in claim 42, wherein R^4 and R^5 are independently selected from the group consisting of cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, and cyclohexylmethyl.

47. (New) The compound as claimed in claim 42, wherein Ar is the structural unit



in which:

R^1 and R^2 are identical or different and are hydrogen, an unbranched alkyl or alkoxy radical having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a branched alkyl or alkoxy radical having 3 to 20 carbon atoms, phenyl or benzyl, where the abovementioned radicals optionally are substituted by halogen, cyano, nitro, or an ester having 1 to 20 carbon atoms.

48. (New) The compound as claimed in claim 47, wherein the alkoxy radicals are substituted by a halogen selected from the group consisting of chlorine, bromine, and fluorine.

49. (New) The compound as claimed in claim 42, wherein Ar is the structural unit